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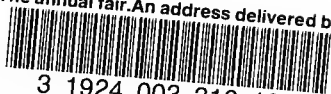
NEW YORK STATE COLLEGES
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AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS



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The annual fair. An address delivered bef



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THE ANNUAL FAIR.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Rensselaer Co. Agricultural Society,

AT LANSINGBURGH,

September 17th, 1857.

BY N. S. S. BEMAN.

TROY, N. Y.:

R. V. WILSON, PRINTER, 225 RIVER STREET.

1857.

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The following Resolution was unanimously passed at the ANNUAL FAIR of the Rensselaer County Agricultural Society, held in Lansingburgh :

" *Resolved*, That the thanks of this Society be presented to the Rev. N. S. S. Beman, D. D., for the very able, appropriate, and interesting ADDRESS just delivered to this Society, and that the President be requested to appoint a Committee to solicit the same for publication."

In conformity with the above resolution, MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN E. WOOL, JOHN H. WILLARD, Esq., and GENERAL J. J. VIELE were appointed said Committee by the President.

REQUEST OF THE COMMITTEE.

Troy, 7th November, 1857.

REV. DR. BEMAN,

My Dear Sir,

I have the honor to enclose herewith, a communication from GEORGE VAIL, Esq., President of the Agricultural Association of Rensselaer County, and agreeably to its requirements and assent of the members of the Committee associated with me, earnestly to request for publication, your able, eloquent and instructive address, delivered at the late Annual Fair and Cattle Show held at Lansingburgh.

With an earnest hope, in behalf of the Committee, that you will comply with their wishes,

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully your obed't serv't,

JOHN E. WOOL,
Chairman of Com.

REPLY.

Troy, Nov. 16th, 1857.

MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN E. WOOL,

My Dear Sir,

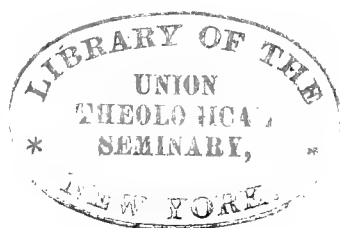
Your communication, in behalf of the Committee of the Rensselaer County Agricultural Society, has been received, and, in reply, I would say, the Address was prepared and delivered at the request of that Society, and I cheerfully consign it to the disposal of their Committee.

Permit me to say, that the same Address was read, at a subsequent date, before the Rutland County Agricultural Society, Vt., and a similar request has been made for its publication ; and I am informed by the Secretary, that the Gentlemen of that Association would be glad to supply their members, by taking part of your edition.

With sentiments of sincere respect for the Committee and their Chairman, and with active co-operation with the Society,

I am yours truly,

N. S. S. BEMAN.



JUL 1 1924

A D D R E S S .

A STUDIED encomium on Agriculture, in our day and in our country, might well be deemed a work of supererogation, and, consequently, would be uncalled for, and out of place. The common expression, "*Our mother Earth*," while it is beautifully metaphorical, is, at the same time, highly suggestive, and contains more truth than poetry,—for she is not only the source of our physical being, but is the living fountain which supplies the streams of a perpetuated corporeal existence. Creatures, constituted as we are, could no more subsist without the products of the earth, than they could without a supply of air and water, or exhibit the activities of life without a material basis to stand upon, and extension or space, for the exhibition of mechanical forces. In our present organization, or mode of existence, the earth was made for man, and man for the earth.

In the early and ruder stages of society,—indeed before society has matured into any thing higher and more refined than that which marks the progress of the wandering clan, men subsist on the spontaneous productions of the earth, the untamed animals that roam upon its surface, and the living multitudes that people the streams. *This is the savage life*. Its supplies are precarious,—its comforts are few. The cultivation of the soil marks a distinct age in the progress of man. It graduates the successive stages of civilization. It is imperfect at first, but it is an era in the history of improvement. The chase and the fishing rod are superseded by the axe and the plow,—and the former are perpetuated only as a pastime or amusement, while the latter are relied upon for the substantial supplies of life. Man

has now a *home*. It is not, as it once was, the dense forest, the broad prairie, or the mountain fastness, but the rural cottage or the substantial farm-house,—and a scene of cultivated beauty and abundance, as by magic, springs into life, and smiles around him. Agriculture and civilization are not only contemporaneous in their origin, but they travel on, side by side, and with equal footsteps, in all their future progress. There is no better test of civilization, in any country, than the degree of attention bestowed upon the cultivation of the soil. I intend to include *culture of every kind*,—the useful, the ornamental, the picturesque: that which strengthens the sinews of a nation not only, but that also which taxes thought, and improves and gratifies the taste. No country was ever covered with rich harvest fields and luxuriant meadows, and the hill-sides and summits dotted thick with flocks and herds, and its habitations surrounded by verdant lawns, interspersed and skirted with ornamental trees, its gardens alive and brilliant with opening flowers, and its orchards bending with various and luscious fruits—where the genius of an enlightened civilization did not, at the same time, breathe its inspirations upon the scene. The earth furnishes no Paradise now without human culture. The head must contrive, and the hand execute; and, then, not only “the wilderness shall become a fruitful field,” but “the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.” The farm and the garden will wear the impress of intelligence and taste, and industry yield its immediate and rich reward. “Man shall not labor in vain, nor spend his strength for nought.”

It may be thought by some, that too high an agency is here attributed to the cultivation of the soil, when I call it the great civilizer of man. FARMING is associated with toil and hard service, and *horticulture* merely with the bouquet and the kitchen,—the eye and the appetite:—and what are these in their influence upon the entire character of our world? Commerce and Manufactures,—the ship and the loom, should not be robbed of their glory. True. The former equalizes the products of the earth, by rendering those of each clime indigenous in every other, and, at the same time, it binds nations together; and the latter furnishes every thing useful and ornamental for our persons and habitations, abridges labor, makes the world merry with the din of active life, and throws over society a new and finished drapery, inimitable in its texture, and beautiful in its colors. No friend of man, or of progress, can undervalue commerce and manufactures. But their highest

glory is, that they are the twin daughters of *agriculture*, and they are both dependent on their mother for existence and support. Without her bounty and fostering care, not a sail would whiten the ocean, nor an anvil would ring with the hammer, nor a factory re-echo the music of the shuttle, nor a waterfall or steam-engine lend its powers for the wealth and glory of man. These streams flow only as the fountain is full.

If the culture of the soil were to cease, and the earth to withhold its supplies, the pulse of industry would stand still,—our busy marts would be blotted out,—our cities would no more rear their princely habitations, or point their spires toward heaven, or be set, as they now are, like beauteous gems on the bosom of the ocean. Man would relapse into barbarism, and his highest aspirations would terminate in the exploits of the chase, and the achievements of war. Human history might be written in one laconic sentence: *Existence spent in hunting men and other wild beasts.*

If the positions I have now taken be correct,—if I have assigned to agriculture its appropriate place in the great circle of human activities,—if it is the foundation-stone which supports the wealth and beauty and power of the whole fabric, then we may well felicitate one another, on our present convocation. The occasion, though social and joyous, embodies most substantial interests, and to give a new impulse to these, we are present at this ANNUAL FAIR. Accustomed to speak from a Text, I shall select mine to-day from the page presented to my eye,—it is “*The Agricultural Fair.*” I shall trace its influence upon those interests which it is designed to promote, and draw some practical lessons from the discussion, which may not be without their future use.

“THE ANNUAL FAIR.”

Its influence upon agricultural pursuits, including all you embrace in your annual exhibitions,—the products of the farm and the garden, the raising of stock, articles of domestic manufacture, and useful inventions for the abridgement of labor, and the promotion of social comfort,—all these come within the circumference and scope of my inquiry. What influence, then, have these yearly gatherings, and the exhibitions of farm-products and of stock,—of fruits and flowers,—and of other articles asso-

ciated with the occasion, upon their PRODUCTION, and especially upon their improvement in quantity or quality?

Assemblages, like the present, make their appeal to one of the strongest principles of our nature,—I mean the *social* principle. Enlist the popular mind; stir up and electrify the masses, and you can accomplish almost any thing. And this is especially true in a country like ours, where prince and people are *one* because they meet and blend in the same person. We govern ourselves,—that is when we are governed at all. Make any interest popular, let it gain a lodgement in the heart of the people, and it can hardly fail of success. And in public assemblies, a sympathy may be created which rarely visits us in solitude. Politicians know this,—and hence it is, more confidence is reposed in one mass meeting, than in ten printing presses. This is *our* mass meeting; and here the *social* of our nature may develop itself in the kindest and most efficient forms—for we are all on one side. We stand upon a common platform. We here meet no rough antagonisms, as in politics; we have no enemies to confront and encounter, except ignorance and prejudice—for these alone stand in the way of our success. The zeal and enthusiasm which may be inspired by this meeting, may become efficient elements of future results.

But besides the ordinary excitements of a large social meeting, there are other agencies at work here in favor of our one great object. The products of labor and skill and handiwork, which are here exhibited, cannot fail of exciting a healthful competition. The premiums which are offered and awarded, must secure the same end. They are intended to operate, and they must operate, as a stimulus to thought and study and effort, and to make practical and efficient farmers. And they must do this in every case where mind is not beyond the reach of ordinary motive. Thought sharpens thought, and one successful experiment induces others of the same character, and the results carefully recorded, form a common stock to which all may have access for information. Such are the Annual Reports of State and County Agricultural Societies,—such the Reports of the U. S. Patent Office,—and such many of the published Addresses delivered on such occasions as this. I shall not refer to this one as a specimen—much less as a model.

But in such publications as I have named, and more formal and elaborate treatises on agriculture and kindred pursuits, we have accumulated stores of practical knowledge

which are, in various ways, brought before the mind at our Annual Fairs—sometimes by a mere reference, and sometimes more in detail—and information is diffused, which is needed by all. An intelligent people must feel its power. This power has been felt. It is felt to-day. It will be felt more and more. We *believe in progress*. And why not progress in agriculture, as in every thing else? All great advances, in our world, have been made, for the most part, by steady, and almost imperceptible, stages,—but there is one other signal fact not to be overlooked in this process: there are times when the spirit of an enterprise, whatever it may be, is revived, and the enterprise itself feels the new and living impulse. It is so in *religion*. The genius of Luther awoke an unwonted train of religious thought, and its pulsation was felt through the great artery of continental and insular Europe. That pulsation is felt still in the American mind. It is so in *learning*. This younger sister was born at the dawn of the Reformation—or, perhaps, I should say, was born *anew*, and she joined her heavenly sister, and they have walked, hand in hand, ever since, among the nations. It is so in *freedom*. The thunders that rocked Bunker Hill, have undying echoes. It is so in *Commerce*. The spirit that projected and executed the enterprise of giving a new continent to the civilized world, has lived in its ocean-home ever since. The intelligence and taste of modern times have given an existence and vitality to *manufactures*, which are filling the world with all that is magnificent and useful. And so it should be also in AGRICULTURE. We need a revival in this department of human industry,—in this high profession of active life. The best excogitations of mind are to be united with the most efficient executions of the hand.

Much has already been effected for agriculture and kindred interests, by that spirit which has been awakened, in our country, during the last few years. Every observing eye must have marked the change. This county has experienced a renovation. And many of the improvements have forced their way against the most dogged conservatism. Prejudice has kept still long enough to be instructed; and many men have learned that their grandfathers, though they may have been very good old Puritans, or very good old Dutchmen, did not know every thing, even about *farming*—and that wisdom, with her predestined life of immortal progress, did not die with them. I am glad it did not. And my kind regard for posterity, leads me to cherish the aspiration, that it may not die with us.

Its career has no prescribed limits. This is the law of God, ordained for mind—and man.

If we were to institute a more minute inquiry respecting the *nature* of those changes of which I have spoken, time and information might both fail me, in any effort I could make to set them fully before you. And yet I must attempt a mere sketch, however hasty and imperfect. A single glance of the eye will tell us that every thing pertaining to the agricultural interests of this county has greatly improved within a few years past. A mere traveler passing through its bounds, twenty years ago, and again to-day, would hardly recognize many of its localities; and most of its cheering renovations have been effected since this Society has been installed in the affections of our citizens. It would be claiming too much to assert, that all the revelations of a happy character which have taken place, were effected by this Society and its yearly exhibitions. It is enough for me to say, that here has been established a great central influence,—here has been seated the main-spring of power. Much might have been done without any concerted action; but to affirm that the same amount of good could have been achieved by individual and spontaneous movements, as by associated and consolidated effort, is to maintain that man, single-handed, is a phalanx, and a scattered few, warring upon their own hooks, are quite as efficient as an embodied army. Union is strength; united action is successful action. And this is true, not only of one thing and a few things, but almost of every thing.

But I have spoken of changes for the better, which may be seen by the dimmest eye,—of the improved beauty and increased abundance which smile around us almost everywhere. And do you ask for specifications? I may reply, in a single word, that barns and other out-buildings are rendered more commodious,—farm-houses are better adapted to their uses,—private residences are more imposing and magnificent,—lands are more thoroughly cultivated, and harvests are more abundant. Fertilizers are now used with some knowledge of their nature, and with a wise regard to the demands of the soil to which they are applied. Attention, too, has been turned to a judicious rotation of crops,—a great practical doctrine which is taught by nature itself. Go into the dense forest, far from the open field of cultivation, fell the trees, and clear the land, and then leave it to a new spontaneous growth,—and it will differ widely from the first. This I have traced by many

careful observations. The Southern States are favorable for testing this fact. Clear away the long-leaf pine, and it will always be succeeded by the short leaf, though there may not be a tree of that variety within fifty miles of the spot. Sweep this away, and it is succeeded by the scrub oak and the black jack, and these, in their turn, by another and still different growth; and the original native production will not re-appear till after the lapse of several years. This is the doctrine of *rotation* taught by the spontaneous working of nature.

Lands become prematurely old and exhausted by a disregard of this principle. Many a farmer might find his prototype in the old man in New Hampshire, mentioned by some Yankee traveler. He was engaged in sowing rye on a sort of worn-out, antediluvian piece of ground, which was, at this time, receiving into its stony bosom, perhaps, for the fiftieth autumn, the seed for the same kind of crop, without any rotation; and the traveler said, "My good daddy, how much do you sow on that field?" He replied, "*About a bushel and a half.*" "And how much do you harvest?" "*About the same.*" This was *traditionary* farming. No *book* farming here! And I may add, this is farming with a vengeance. And this skill had probably descended, as an heir-loom, from father to son, from a period nearly as remote as the landing of the Mayflower.

But there is no one thing in which the influence of Agricultural Societies and their Annual Fairs has been more powerfully felt for good, than in the improvement of *Stock*. This is becoming a great interest in our country; and farmers begin to feel it. All kinds of domestic animals have of late excited new and increased attention. The remunerative prices of butchers' meat, butter, cheese, and wool, must necessarily attract the notice of those whose business it is to produce and vend these articles. The size and quality of the animal, its habits of feeding, and its final product in the market, are matters of obvious interest to all. And what better occasion could be furnished of giving birth or strength to this interest, than the Annual Fair Ground, covered and beautified with fine Stock? Man is gifted, by his Maker, with an eye to discriminate "between the precious and the vile." Every one admires a well-formed, symmetrical, and finely developed animal. The elegance of form, and grace of motion almost instinctively fix our attention:—the fleet horse, the strong ox, and the fine-tempered and docile cow, are our admiration. This is so almost everywhere, but it is especially the Anglo-

Saxon taste. It becomes a passion with men who are devoted to the raising and training of superior stock; and it is a taste or passion easily diffused among a people. And the Annual Cattle-Show affords a favorable opportunity for exhibiting stock, and of making a strong impression in favor of good cattle. The comparative excellencies and defects of different breeds, may here be seen; and their merits thoroughly discussed and canvassed. The same may be said of all domestic animals, which contribute to the wealth and comfort of man. Horses, oxen, cows, sheep, swine—have all greatly improved, in the county, within the last ten or twenty years; and the Annual Fair has contributed no stinted influence in securing this result. No part of this whole exhibition,—not even the FLORAL HALL, furnished by woman's finer taste, and adjusted and decorated by her chaste hand, attracts more attention than the stalls, and pens, and other stations of live stock. Flowers and fruits are attractive, but with all their fascinations, they occupy, in the arrangements of God, a position inferior to that assigned to creatures endowed with life. The former germinate and grow,—the latter exercise the high functions of vitality and locomotion. And not a few—the majestic horse, for instance, evinces powers of sagacity bordering upon reason. I have very little respect for any man, let his occupation or profession be what it may, who is not inspired with pure delight, in viewing the form, proportions, and graceful movements of a splendid animal. Such creatures of God, made still more perfect and beautiful by the affection and care of man, should give true pleasure to every farmer. It is a happy task to tend good stock. And yet I am sorry to say, that this enthusiasm does not warm the bosoms of all who are devoted to rural and agricultural pursuits. Many a farmer seems to estimate his stock by *numbers*, rather than by beauty, proportion and weight. Such an one will tell you that an ox is an ox, and a cow is a cow, and a pig is a pig,—and so it is; and he might add with equal truth and gravity,—*and a goat is a goat.*

But after all the progress that has been made, the interests which are set forth and represented at this annual meeting, have not been duly appreciated by the farming community. While much has been done, it serves only to show us how much more remains to be done. Agriculture and all its collateral interests, are still in their infancy among us. We cannot compare yet with many of the older countries of Europe. It might not be expedient, or even

practicable for us to attempt a close imitation of their modes of culture in all respects. There are specific differences in many things which would sternly forbid such a measure. The high price of labor here renders it imperative for us to cultivate, or rather *run over*, more land than they do. But there should be a gradual approximation to their method. And there will be. Higher culture should be aimed at,—and the powers of productiveness which lie dormant in our soil, should be more fully taxed. I cannot, however, pursue this theme farther here.

But the superior attention which is bestowed on stock of all kinds, and especially in England, is worthy of all praise, and of universal imitation. It makes an American's eye glisten, and his spirits joyous, to go out in the morning of any market day into old Smithfield, where the bloody Mary used to burn heretics, and see the vast congregation of cattle and sheep and other animals, well fattened for the market. They are the living symbols of industry and prosperity. Nothing on this continent can equal these pictures of English tact, and taste, and wealth in farming.

Many radical reformatations are still called for among our people. As I have already said, they have been auspiciously begun. These should be carried out, and made perfect. Farmers must honor their profession, and then it will be honored by others,—by all men. They should study the *science*, as well as the *art*, of farming,—for it is a specific science, as well as a practical art. Many read too little, and especially in relation to their own business; and yet their opportunities are not scanty. Agricultural Papers of a high character abound in our country, and the comparative leisure of the winter season, and especially the long, cheerful winter evenings, afford abundant opportunities for mental culture, and particularly on this subject. They should read the best Books on farming, and kindred matters. What can man know, on any important subject, without reading? Take away books, and the lawyer would be a pettifogger, the doctor a quack, and the preacher a ranter; and without such auxiliaries, the farmer would unite all these in one—and be a *pettifogging, quacking, ranting* farmer.

Agriculture will ever be the great interest of our vast Republic. A large proportion of our citizens are devoted to this one employment. And shall they rush hap-hazard; and unprepared into this responsible business? Men should be educated for their calling; and farmers should not be deemed an exception to the rule. Every common school

should have an agricultural class to which the elements of knowledge, on this subject, should be carefully imparted. Here the process should begin. A great model agricultural farm, supported by the State, in my humble opinion, is a great legislative humbug.* Every farm should be a model farm, and every tiller of it, should be a professor qualified to teach the art and science of working it. In connection with this a few rudimental Class Books should be prepared, and approved by the authority of the State, and their study in the common school, should be made imperative. Lessons on the great principles of husbandry in general, once learned, would never be forgotten. Taught to the child, they become interwoven with the warp and woof of his being, and will last as long as he lasts.

The farm and the garden are intimately associated, and the culinary department with the floral and the landscape. If we would clothe the country with the most attractive robes—a vesture of richest dyes—some attention must be devoted to other productions than those which fill our barns, and grannaries, and cellars. Farming, in every old and wealthy country, will unite, to some extent, knowledge and taste; and their joint contributions will invest it with beauty, and load it with wealth. This happy union renders England one of the most charming countries, to the eye of a traveler, in the world. While teeming harvests adorn the fields, and tell us of solid wealth, some whole counties seem to spread around us, in all the picturesque beauty of one extended and interminable garden. This is true of Kent and the Isle of Wight.

But one seems to whisper, ‘this is mere Book farming.’ And are we to understand that every thing is to be despised which is learned from books? What is the world without books? The knowledge which is embodied in a written or printed form, is much more definite and reliable than that which depends on the vagueness and uncertainties of tradition. And why, I would ask, is not this objection urged against every kind of knowledge? We might just as well call any good man, a mere *book christian*, because he has learned his religion from the Bible. Such an objection would much better become a Roman Catholic than a Protestant. If we are to repudiate all science and knowledge derived from books, and depend on the resources of oral tradition, our world must become stereotyped,—or rather *fossilized*, and progress is out of the question. Some

* The speaker alone holds himself responsible for these sentiments.

men seem to dread progress; and this feeling lies at the basis of all that is said against placing agriculture and associated branches of business, on a common level with all human improvements. Man is progressive. His acquirements are progressive. His developments are progressive. And so are the changes and improvements of that world on which his talents, acquirements, and energies, are expended. To oppose all this, is to war upon the laws of nature, and is as unwise as it is futile. Things will move on, whether we do or not. This *statu quo*—or stand-still policy, reminds me of a quiet old gentleman I once read of, or heard of, or dreamed of—I will not now say which—who was so conservative, and so much dreaded progress, that he never drove up a steep hill without first carefully adjusting the breeching of his harness for fear his wagon would run over his horse.

But let us glance our thoughts again at this objection against what is called Book farming. We have some specimens for the illustration of this matter, before us to-day. And if these are the fruits, I am compelled to think well of the system. Take a deliberate survey of all the products of industry and taste and ingenuity—some of these animate and some inanimate—densely crowded and skilfully arranged within this enclosure, and label them all "*book-farming*," and think you that this would create a prejudice against this kind of culture? I have no such apprehension, I cannot look upon the profession, and variety, and wealth, and elegance, and utility, and taste which solicit attention on every hand, without feeling an instinctive veneration for that volume which has wrought such wonders. These specimens would make me a disciple of the system, if I had not been converted long ago. I should be disposed to say of such a volume as a certain old lady said of the Dictionary which she had borrowed, for a hasty perusal, of one of her neighbors, "*There is a great deal of pretty reading in that Book.*"

Having stated very imperfectly some of the beneficial influences of the Agricultural Fair and the Cattle-Show,—their re-productive power upon every interest with which they are connected, it falls within the legitimate scope of my purpose to point out some abuses which may occur,—some incidental evils which should be guarded against, that the end proposed may be effectually secured. A good thing perverted, becomes something worse than a common nuisance. It is a craft that sails under false colors, and is all the more dangerous from the flag it bears. It is a positive

evil wearing the symbol of a public blessing. Many are deceived by it, because its bright robes conceal its ugliness.

This Fair, after all I have said in favor of its healthful tendencies,—its stimulating and productive influence upon the interests of the farmer and the great community around us, may become comparatively useless, if not positively hurtful. It should not degenerate into a mere pastime. True, there is enough of novelty, of originality, of excitement, to fill agreeably a vacant hour; but graver matters demand our notice here. Every thing foreign to our object should be rendered quite subordinate, if not be entirely excluded. This Society, I am happy to say, has taken praise-worthy measures to protect its own interests from encroachment. You, gentlemen, were the first to organize under the Act of the Legislature for the encouragement of Agriculture, and have been the first to make permanent *enclosures*, and to erect commodious buildings for your exhibitions. Many possible evils are thus excluded. If they occur, they must be perpetrated by outsiders. A good police should be stationed in the purlieus, that the peace may not be disturbed, and young men corrupted and swindled, and your Society be held responsible, at least, for a portion of the mischief.

But there is one exercise, or exhibition, sometimes connected with these Annual Fairs, which I name with great diffidence. It is not chargeable on this Society,—at least, not this year,—if it were, I might not have the moral courage to allude to it at all. Or if I were a young man, I should probably hold my peace. But as circumstances are, I may avail myself of the plea used by the Apostle when writing to Philemon,—“being such an one as Paul the aged,” I shall venture to give my opinion. I refer to “LADIES’ PRIZE RIDING,” as a constituent part, or an appendage, of an Agricultural Fair and Cattle-Show. It may be a very pleasant amusement,—but amusement is not the object for which we have come together. It may afford a favorable opportunity for setting off the fine proportions of a splendid horse, and the graces and flexibility of his movements, and to exhibit the beauty and agility of an elegant lady, and to demonstrate, before the public, her horsemanship,—or horse-woman-ship. But I have been greatly puzzled to ascertain to what department of agricultural pursuits it properly belongs. It might be deemed discourteous to call it a *cattle-show*. It can hardly be considered the cultivation of the soil,—though perhaps some young and mellow hearts may be a little disturbed by *harrowing*

the surface in the operation. By an act of courtesy it might be called *plowing*. We have a precedent. The Rev. Dr. Witherspoon, one of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, before he left Scotland, wrote a caustic satire on the liberal or latitudinarian clergy in the established Kirke. The drapery of his satire, however, is allegorical. An ecclesiastical Body is represented under the image or symbol of a corporation for the encouragement of agriculture. A young man appears before this venerable Body for examination, that he might obtain a Certificate as one qualified to follow this business,—or, in other words, a *license to preach*. A member of the corporation who suspected the superficiality of the stripling, asked him how he would plow hard ground; and he replied, ‘*by running a wheelbarrow over it.*’ The moderator, who sympathized with the young man in theological sentiment, was greatly alarmed at this unfortunate blunder, and gravely shook his venerable wig, and said, “How *deep* would you plow hard ground? And he promptly answered—“*Six feet deep.*” Such kind of sub-soiling might very well follow this wheelbarrow plowing, performed on horse-back, to which I now refer.

Where these prize-ridings have been introduced, they have become the grand attraction of the scene. Solid interests are overlooked in the midst of mere sports which can serve no higher purpose than to exhibit the pride of some gay steed, or the conscious power of his brilliant rider. The thing may all be well enough in its place; but has no more connection with the encouragement of agriculture, or useful inventions, or the mechanic arts in general, than would be the introduction, upon Fair grounds, of a theatre, or Dan Rice’s Great Show,—half Circus, and half Menagerie.

Our friends of Albany County, are now making some original experiments in *farming*. Their motto would seem to be “EXCELSIOR,” and their progress is not only onward, but upward. They are giving practical lessons in agriculture, by inviting the people to watch, with the intensity of Chaldean astrologers or star-gazers, an ascending Balloon! I wish them success in their upward flight, and their farming in these nether heavens. But if the object is to raise funds by these empty shows—entirely foreign to associations like ours, I would suggest to the Managers of Agricultural Societies, that it might be well to establish a *whiskey shanty* and a *Lager Beer shop*, and they would realize more money, and, at the same time, promote the manufac-

ture of three popular, if not necessary articles—*Whiskey, Beer, and inebriates.*

I congratulate you, gentlemen, on the return of your sixteenth anniversary, and ardently hope your future prosperity may be still more gratifying than that which has marked your progress hitherto.

[The following remarks concluded the Address as it was delivered in Rutland.]

Vermont is destined to stand high on the list of wealthy States. It is rich in treasures which lie beneath the soil, and especially in marble. But she has two things which I glance at—*fast horses* and *maple sugar*. I leave the horses to speak for themselves. The Vermont sugar cane is much taller than that of more Southern climes—sometimes attaining the height of more than a hundred feet; and it often grows on rocky and precipitous hill-sides which is hardly fit for any other culture. And as a more distinctive characteristic, I would say, it is the growth of a free soil, and the whole process of manufacture is carried on by free hands and free hearts. And let your motto be, "Free hands and free hearts for ever."

